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ABSTRACT

The comprehensive National Child Care Staffing Study confirmed that American children are in jeopardy because their teachers are poorly compensated and minimally trained. An increasing number of local and state efforts have begun to face this crisis head-on. This booklet reviews these efforts, focusing primarily on strategies for raising salaries. Examples of successful attempts to win salary increases by teachers' collective action are provided. Legislative strategies for providing increased salaries are described. These include nonspecific means such as reimbursement rates and quality improvement funds; and salary-specific means such as salary enhancement grants, Head Start staff compensation, scholarship funds, and loan forgiveness. Contributions to improving child care through increased worker salaries can be made by individuals and groups other than teachers. Descriptions of and suggestions for such contributions are given for: (1) parents, who can work jointly with caregivers, and should be kept informed by caregivers; (2) child care directors and their associations; (3) owners of for-profit programs; (4) teacher educators; (5) early childhood organizations; (6) resource and referral agencies, through informing parents of the need for a qualified work force; (7) researchers; (8) and employers. (BC)

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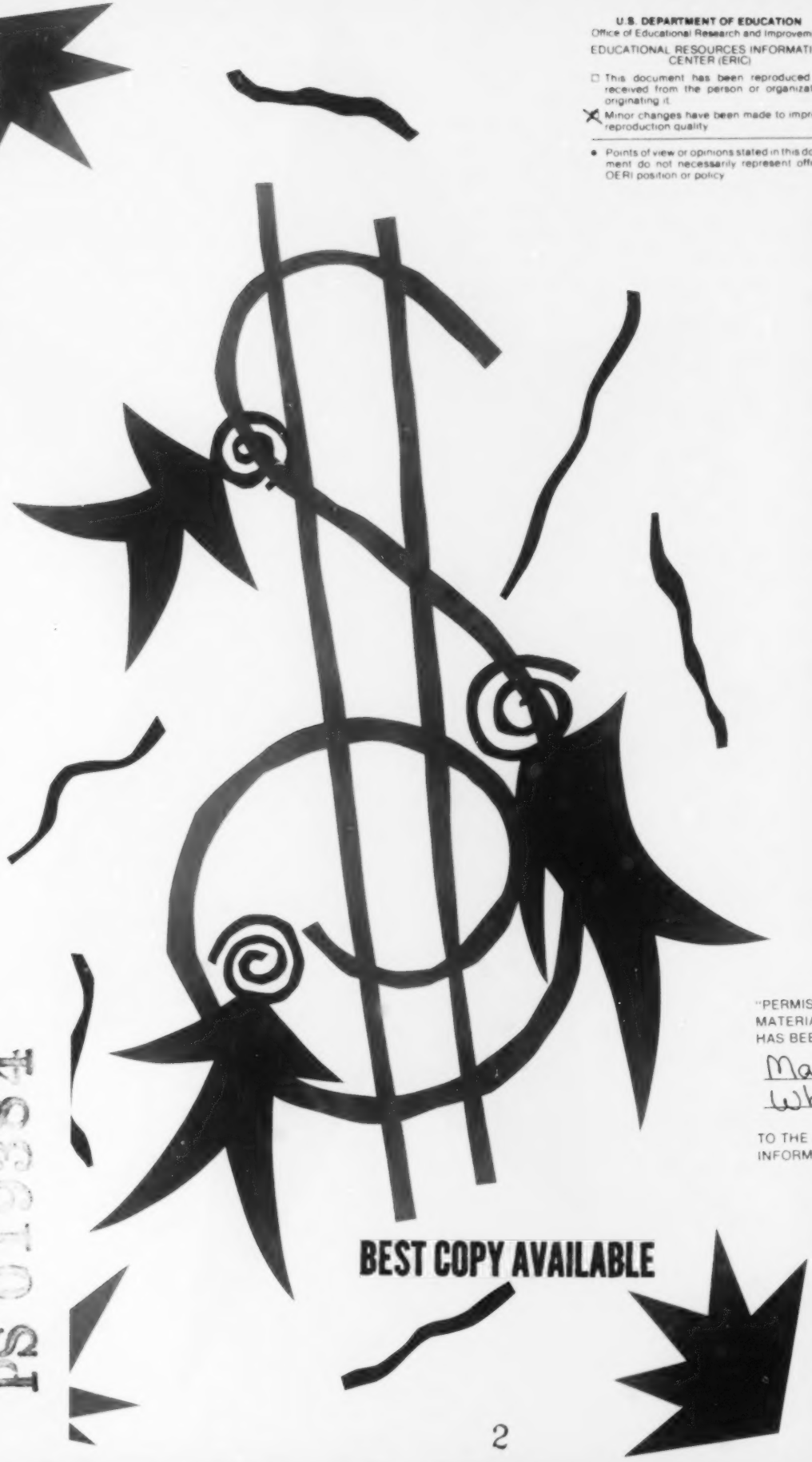
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FROM THE FLOOR:
Raising Child Care Salaries

Marcy Whitebook
Caro Pemberton
Joan Lombardi
Ellen Galinsky

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INTRODUCTION

The American child care delivery system is failing. The occasional low-grade ailments of a decade ago, caused by inadequate funding, have evolved into a chronic, perhaps life-threatening illness which places children, parents and providers at the most serious risk. The child care system has grown rapidly since the early 1970s, but without proper nourishment; as a result, many programs are now operating with an insufficient number of qualified staff and are providing barely adequate services.

The National Child Care Staffing Study, the most comprehensive examination ever conducted of child care teachers and their relationship to the calibre of services, confirmed the diagnosis: children are in jeopardy because their teachers are poorly compensated and minimally trained.[1] Low pay fuels turnover. Staff who are able to interact appropriately with children, and to provide developmentally suitable environments and activities, are discouraged from working in child care. Children who attend centers with poorly compensated and poorly trained teachers suffer in language and social development.

The National Child Care Staffing Study not only issued a strong warning, but wrote a "prescription" to the ailing child care field:

- Increase child care teacher salaries in order to recruit and retain a qualified work force;

- Expand the proportion of teaching staff in the total work force who have formal education and specialized training in early childhood education, in order to improve their ability to interact effectively with children;

- Adopt state and federal standards for child-adult ratios, staff training, education and compensation in order to raise the floor of quality in American child care centers;

- Develop industry standards for the adult work environment to minimize disparities in quality among types of child care programs; and

- Promote public education about the importance of adequately trained and compensated teaching staff, in order to secure support for meeting the full cost of child care services.

This prescription offers no quick and easy cure. Instead, as a doctor might counsel a patient to alter his or her life style in order to prevent disaster, the Staffing Study's

recommendations leave the difficult work of change to the child care community. And indeed, the child care community's response thus far has been similar to the ways in which patients react to grim news from a doctor. There are those who deny the implications of what they have learned, perhaps continuing to complain but not taking any serious steps to address the illness. Others are resigned--acknowledging and adjusting to the serious diagnosis, but not believing they have any power to avert disaster. Finally, there are those who embrace the warnings and attempt to make changes, in the belief that they can halt or even cure the disease.

Denial is exemplified by the director who laments the expense of continually placing ads in the newspaper, or of using a temporary agency to staff her program, but who never approaches her board with a proposal to raise salaries and never attends the local directors' group which is seeking a community solution to the staffing crisis. Denial is also evident in the college training program which assumes that students with only one or two early childhood courses will be working under the supervision of a trained, experienced teacher; such students, for lack of more qualified staff, are frequently becoming head teachers themselves.

Resignation and accommodation are, regrettably, an all-too-common response to the staffing crisis. In a San Francisco Bay Area center, the director required teachers to wear name tags; parents had complained that they couldn't remember teachers' names because turnover was so high. In the same center, children are encouraged to call all the adults "teacher," rather than learn the names of a constantly changing staff. In Minnesota and Kentucky, centers have recently closed because qualified teachers could not be found. And throughout the country, veteran early childhood teachers and directors are flocking to the public schools, where they are better able to earn a living wage.

Fortunately, these depressing examples are countered by an increasing number of local and state efforts to face the crisis head-on. Many people are exploring options for change so that children will not be reluctant to go to child care, confused about who will care for them; so that parents will not be racked by guilt for leaving their child with yet another new provider; and so that dedicated, skilled teachers will not be forced by financial considerations to seek jobs in another field.

This booklet contains examples of such creative efforts directed toward raising child care salaries. We are heartened by this burgeoning movement. Ten years ago, only a handful of people were focused on child care staffing issues. At the 1981 National Association for the Education of Young Children Conference in Detroit, teachers and advocates concerned about salaries launched the Child Care Employee Caucus to bring the compensation issue to the NAEYC agenda. Founding caucus members came from the Child Care Employee Project in California, District 65 UAW in Massachusetts, the Child Care Workers Alliance in Minnesota, and teachers' groups from Michigan and Wisconsin.

Each year we have witnessed growth in the size of the Caucus and its influence within NAEYC. This growth reflects the activities of child care providers and advocates in over twenty states to address the staffing crisis. The emerging strength of the child care compensation movement is also reflected in these organizational developments:

- The number of unions representing child care teachers, and the number of requests for information about collective bargaining, has expanded. In addition to District 65 UAW, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the National Education Association (NEA) now represent increasing numbers of child care providers in collective bargaining agreements.

- Organizations dedicated solely to improving child care compensation and training have recently formed in Seattle and Austin, and the Child Care Employee Project and the Minneapolis Child Care Workers Alliance, established over a decade ago, continue to thrive.

- Professional organizations such as NAEYC (at both the national and local affiliate levels) and family day care associations are demonstrating increasing commitment to addressing the staffing crisis through conferences, public policy activities and resource development.

The diversity of the endeavors chronicled in this booklet reveals just how great an effort it will take to address the staffing crisis and to heal the child care delivery system. A comprehensive approach at the federal, state and local levels is necessary. Efforts to improve compensation must be accompanied by efforts to finance and expand training, to improve government and professional standards, and to build public awareness that leads to a demand for quality services.

In this booklet, we have chosen to focus primarily on strategies for raising salaries, because we believe that the child care system will deteriorate beyond repair if the low wages of caregivers continue to be ignored. We also believe that these efforts to increase salaries are most desperately in need of vigorous support, because they continue to encounter resistance within the child care and public policy communities. Without these supports, the small efforts in isolated communities will not be sufficient to change public policies. We also need to communicate about these activities so that teachers and advocates can learn from each other's experience and can benefit from the tools and strategies others have developed.

The Child Care Employee Project is dedicated to providing the links between the many creative efforts to address the staffing crisis. We hope that those of you whose efforts are recorded in this booklet will continue to work with us. And we hope that those

who are new to these issues will join us in our efforts to secure a skilled and stable child care work force.

MOBILIZING TEACHER ACTION

"Only those who do the work of providing the care and education of young children can raise the problem of inadequate compensation from the level of a problem that should be solved some day to the level of a problem that must be solved now."

Jim Morin
Taking Action[2]

Throughout the country, child care providers are recognizing the potential of their power to act collectively. Some have joined organizations such as the Child Care Employee Project. Others have worked together informally for a time-limited, specific action. Still others have decided that unions provide the most effective vehicle for collective action in the work place and in the public policy arena.

Sometimes the goal of an action has been to bring public attention to the issue of low salaries; at other times, actions have sought a specific outcome, such as a pay increase or new legislation. Action can be effective at many levels. It may require only the involvement of the staff of one center, teachers from an entire community, or the participation and support of many constituencies, including other child care advocates, parents, and labor unions.

Regardless of the scope of an action to raise salaries, teachers must address the following questions:

1) Who has the power to make the decision to raise salaries?
2) What approaches will best influence the decision maker(s)?
3) Do we have sufficient power to influence the decision maker(s)?
4) With whom do we need to build alliances in order to influence the decision maker(s), and how can we persuade these allies to join our effort?

Often, the first hurdle for child care teachers is believing that they have the right to take action. For many, self-advocacy runs contrary to their professional socialization and self-image. Teachers have been taught to consider the needs of children and to ignore their own, so that voicing their own concerns can feel awkward or even inappropriate. Isolation, high turnover, low morale and low self-esteem leave many teachers feeling powerless to change their current circumstances. Because most teachers depend on their income to support themselves and their families, they are often reluctant to undertake strategies that might "rock the boat."

Several groups, including the Child Care Employee Project, the Child Care Workers Alliance in Minneapolis, the Worthy Wages Task Force in Seattle and the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, have conducted intensive training sessions to help teachers "find their voices" and work towards self-empowerment. These workshops have taught teachers about the process of social change and how to develop advocacy skills. More importantly, they have helped teachers to identify how stressful working conditions and low wages create barriers to providing the best quality care for children. As they share concerns about their working conditions, teachers are able to recognize the common struggle faced by everyone in this work force, and thus can begin to identify as members of a larger movement.

The following examples illustrate how teachers have worked through unions or other associations in order to take action to improve their pay and working conditions. Teachers have selected a variety of approaches to bring attention to their demands. In some cases, the action was directed toward decision makers at a particular center; in others, teachers realized that a change had to be made at the public policy level because of how their center was funded. The actions have included a rally at the state capitol, a one-day walk-out as a show of strength, and a strike where teachers walked off the job until their demands were met. While the strategies vary, in each of these examples teachers found their ability to influence the decision maker(s) required them to join with other teachers and advocates and to gain the support of the families they serve.

- In 1987, the child care teachers at the Oakland/Piedmont Jewish Community Center, who are members of SEIU Local 535, asked for a 9.5% raise during contract negotiations. Management countered with an offer of a 2% raise, a cap on health benefits and a two-tier wage structure.

  Teachers turned to the center parents for support, through informational picketing and meetings. Unable to reach an agreement with management, the union called for a strike. Families set up "strike schools" in their homes as a way to handle their child care needs and to demonstrate support for the teachers. After a seven-day strike, management offered (and the union ratified) a contract which retained the health benefits, reduced the differential in the two-tier wage structure, and provided 16% raises over three years.

  Three years later, when the same group of teachers began to negotiate a new contract with management, they again met with an unacceptable offer. In response, teachers organized the support of parents and staged a one-day "sick out." This job action effectively conveyed the seriousness of their intent and averted the need to call another strike.

- In 1988, California members of the Child Care Employee Project joined with other teachers and advocates in a campaign to guarantee an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for child care centers receiving state subsidy. The lack of

COLAs for these programs over the past decade had seriously eroded staff salary levels, and teachers felt that without a COLA they would be unable to advocate for salary raises.

To dramatize their message, teachers and directors from more than 200 child care centers mailed packages of play dough to the governor with messages such as "We can't survive on play dough--we need real dough," or "We've stretched this dough as far as it will go." Two days later, teachers, parents, advocates and children gathered on the Capitol steps outside the governor's office for a press conference and rally, during which they mixed up a batch of play dough and delivered it to the governor and key legislators. Before the new fiscal year began, the governor signed legislation providing for an annual COLA.

- In early 1990, 300 child care workers in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia won a salary enhancement grant from their provincial government, increasing salaries by as much as $5,000 over two years. The two-year campaign leading to this victory was led by a coalition of teachers, parents and advocates, and involved a salary survey (conducted without funding by volunteers), an effective media campaign, legislative lobbying, a strike and a province-wide walk-out.

  Organizers designed their campaign to be sufficiently "newsworthy" to capture media attention. They gathered the support of parents and other community members, using parents as media spokespersons in order to show that the effort had broad support and was not simply a matter of workers demanding more money for themselves.

  Prior to the strike and walk-out, members of the coalition delivered their message to the legislature through telephone calls, letters and pickets. The entire staff of one center went on strike, naming the legislature rather than the board of their center as the strike's target. On the fourth day, 80% of the centers in the province joined the strikers in a one-day walk-out, setting up parades and demonstrations at the legislature and in communities throughout the province. The day after the walk-out, the strikers were offered a settlement; a week and a half later, the Legislature announced the grant to increase salaries.

- In 1990, child care teachers in Massachusetts launched a Campaign for Worthy Wage$ to protest state budget cutbacks in child care funding. Massachusetts had been the first state to earmark funds specifically to enhance the salaries of child care staff. The state legislature continued to allocate this funding each year from 1986 to 1988, until the state hit a budget deficit and not only eliminated the salary funding but began to cut into child care services overall.

  Teachers and advocates launched the campaign as a proactive attempt to influence the agenda of the incoming governor and to maintain their vision of quality services.

They set up a series of forums across the state at which teachers spoke out about their needs and strategized how to address the cutbacks and influence the new administration. The forums culminated in a Convention of Child Care Workers for Worthy Wage$, at which teachers developed a platform and a list of questions for the gubernatorial candidates on child care quality issues.

It will take a significant redistribution of economic resources for child care teachers to receive adequate compensation. This kind of social and economic change occurs only when the groups demanding the change have sufficient power to make it happen. Those who work in early childhood education are the most appropriate people to demand change in the field, and they can most effectively gain power by acting together.

LEGISLATIVE STRATEGIES

Federal, state and local governments are beginning to address the child care staffing crisis. At the federal level, provisions for salary increases have been incorporated into legislative language for Head Start and military child care programs and the proposed comprehensive child care bill. Scholarship provisions for child care staff have been included in the National Teacher Act and the Child Development Associate (CDA) scholarship bill has been expanded. Several states have taken action to improve child care salaries and/or to establish scholarship funds. The following is an overview of state and local salary initiatives.

Improving child care staff salaries through legislation or budget action has had a checkered history. Although at least eight states have taken some kind of action to increase salaries, several have either failed to provide adequate funding, discontinued the effort, or altered their approach. But despite the difficulty of using legislative strategies to improve salaries, several models have emerged. A combination of these and other models will be needed in the future to achieve a more comprehensive and effective approach to improving salaries across program types.

Reimbursement Rates

Some states, either through legislation or through the budget process, have increased their reimbursement rates for child care programs and targeted the increases specifically to staff salaries. Other states indicate that they have indirectly improved salaries with overall increases in the reimbursement rate. There is no evidence, however, that general increases in rates--without specific guidelines for salary enhancement or wage scale targets--will indeed improve staff compensation, instead of being used to meet other escalating costs of doing business, such as higher rents and insurance rates.

An increase in reimbursement rates does have the advantage of becoming part of the ongoing base of funds available to providers; it may be more stable than a special grant fund, which can easily be discontinued. But there are disadvantages to relying on a reimbursement rate strategy alone. First, increasing reimbursement rates often means increasing costs for fee-paying parents since child care programs in most states cannot charge the state more than they charge the public. In some states, therefore, this strategy has increased the problem of child care affordability. Second, an increase in reimbursement rates will not help programs that do not serve subsidized families--although increased salaries in one sector of the child care community have been shown to stimulate wage increases overall, as programs work to remain competitive. Finally, since caregivers'

salaries are generally very low, rates must be increased substantially on an annual basis in order to make any difference in compensation levels. Several examples follow of states which have raised reimbursement rates.

In Massachusetts, beginning in 1986, the Governor's budget included salary enhancement money which was distributed through rate increases to providers serving subsidized families. As part of this effort, the state established recommended salary ranges. More than $15 million was spent to upgrade salaries during the first three years. In the first two years, average salaries for center-based direct care staff increased by 32 percent. Over three years, the average daily rate for family child care providers increased by 41%. Due to state budget decreases, however, additional funds for salary enhancement were not available in 1989 and 1990.

Minnesota passed a bill in 1987 which had two provisions regarding child care rates. First, it stated that "The rate set by any county shall not be lower than 110% of the median rate for like care arrangements in that county." Advocates claim that this provision has helped increase salaries, since many programs were paid 110% of the median rate for the first time. The second provision tied rates over 110% to increases in wages. It stated that "providers could be reimbursed for more than 110% of the median rate if they paid more than 112% of the county average rate for child care workers." Unfortunately, few counties took advantage of this provision, and it has recently been repealed. In other action in Minnesota, NAEYC-accredited centers can now receive higher reimbursement rates.

In 1989, Pennsylvania earmarked $2 million to increase salaries for staff in centers serving Title XX-subsidized families. These funds were used to increase reimbursement rates by 2.6% for providers who could show they were using the additional funds for salary increases. This increase reached the majority of providers serving subsidized families, but due to limited funding, salaries only increased by 13¢ per hour for teachers currently earning $5.00 per hour.

Quality Improvement Funds

A state or local child care quality improvement fund can provide money to improve quality in a variety of areas, including salaries. Alaska, for example, established such a fund as early as 1981, and spent more than $2 million in 1989. The "Quality Enhancement Grant Program" provides grants of $25 a month per child enrolled in programs (including family child care) willing to serve subsidized families. Funds can be used in six areas: staff compensation, augmenting staff, health and nutritional needs of children, age-appropriate equipment, staff training, and parent education and involvement. Most of the money has been used to increase salaries.

Such a fund may be easier to establish than a fund targeted to salaries only, because it can be used to improve a variety of areas and may therefore appear less "self-serving" and easier to justify before legislators. Unlike increases in reimbursement rates, such a grant program can be made available to a wider range of providers, including those who do not presently serve subsidized families. Opening up the fund to providers who are "willing" to serve low-income families may increase such families' child care options.

Salary Enhancement Grants

Salary enhancement grants are similar to quality improvement funds, but are targeted specifically for salaries and benefits. Such a strategy may be difficult to justify to legislators, who are often wary of passing legislation that benefits only one segment of the work force. In addition, where ongoing funding is not guaranteed, such grants have been used for "bonuses" rather than to increase salaries, and may not have a long-term effect on improving salaries. Despite these limitations, however, salary enhancement grants have successfully provided direct subsidies for salaries to a wide variety of providers in various communities.

New York's legislature passed the Child Care Salary and Benefits Enhancement Bill in 1988. This bill provided funds to local Departments of Social Services for increasing staff salaries in nonprofit child care centers and Head Start programs. The legislature approved $12 million for the first year. Each county distributed the funds based on a formula: 40% went to programs willing to serve subsidized families, 40% went to programs serving families at or below 200% of poverty level, and 20% was distributed at the discretion of the county. Since there was no assurance that the funds would continue beyond the first year, several programs gave out bonuses instead of increasing ongoing compensation. Despite threats of funding cuts, advocates maintained almost $12 million for 1990. The funds, however, will now be distributed in different categories: a portion will be put into reimbursement rates, a portion will be used for salary grants to Head Start, and a portion will be used for other nonprofit programs.

Although it did not pass a specific salary enhancement grant program, Maine provided approximately $800,000 in increases to state-contracted providers between 1987 and 1989. These funds did not affect the reimbursement rate and were not available to centers in the voucher program. However, the funds did allow salary increases of 15% for child care staff in contracted programs.

Salary enhancement grants have also been used in counties and cities. In Fairfax County, Virginia, for example, the Quality Assurance Plan was passed by the County Board of Supervisors in 1987. This fund provides eligible head teachers with a $2,000 annual bonus. Only full-time head teachers with bachelor's degrees in early childhood education or related fields are eligible. Eligible teachers must also work in programs where at least 25% of the total number of children enrolled each month participate in the

county subsidy program or receive state child care funds. Reports indicate that the program has reduced the turnover of qualified staff.

In Canada, Toronto's Day Care Grant Program began in 1983. Grants were provided to nonprofit centers to raise salaries or pay for benefits without increasing parent fees. Participating centers received two lump-sum payments each year. After the first three years, salaries had increased more than 20%.

Head Start Staff Compensation

At least three states--New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire--have provided salary enhancement funds directly for Head Start programs. New York and Massachusetts, as described above, also provided funds for other child care programs. New Hampshire's salary enhancement initiative was for Head Start only. In 1988, the New Hampshire state legislature budgeted $225,000 to improve Head Start salaries. These funds were given to a state agency which in turn distributed them to the six Head Start grantees in the state, based on a formula of $300.00 per child. Several other states have provided "contributive support" to Head Start, which in turn can be used to help raise salaries.

Comparable Worth

Based on a comparable worth study within the state community college system, the state of Washington has provided approximately $1 million to increase the salaries of child care staff in community college child care programs.

Scholarship Funds and Loan Forgiveness

At least four states have developed scholarship funds or loan forgiveness programs for early childhood staff. Under Maryland's child care tuition assistance program, people who receive an A.A. or B.A. in child development or early childhood education, or a CDA, are eligible to apply for a loan--up to $2,000 a year, for up to four years. After graduation, they can then have a year of loan repayments waived for every year they work in a child care center or as a registered family child care provider. The Maryland General Assembly approved $100,000 for this program in 1990.

In Minnesota, a fund is available to provide half the costs of NAEYC accreditation for a center or of a CDA credential for a family child care provider. In Maine, a $30,000 scholarship fund was made available in 1989 to provide education and training grants to providers who are already in the profession and who are enrolled in programs leading to a college degree in early childhood education or a related field. In Virginia, the state legislature recently passed a bill to include teachers in early childhood programs as part

of the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program. Applicants must be full-time students at a Virginia college or university offering a teacher preparation program. A student can receive an annual loan of $2,000. One year of the loan is forgiven for each year a recipient teaches.

California's state legislature recently approved a bill to establish a Child Development Teacher Loan Assumption Program, but the bill was vetoed by the governor. This program would have awarded 50 warrants each year, entitling recipients to have their student loans assumed when they completed specified educational requirements and taught in a child care program.

A Diversified Approach

In order to improve the status and working conditions of child care staff in a wide variety of settings, advocates in Illinois, Washington and California are planning to launch a more diversified approach.

In Illinois, advocates are drafting a bill that will include a salary enhancement grant program for all licensed facilities, a scholarship program, a reimbursement rate increase for salary raises at subsidized child care programs, and a public education campaign about the value of early childhood programs.

In Washington, advocates have drafted a "full cost of care campaign" which includes plans to increase salaries, to create a mechanism to link child care providers to a state health plan, and to establish a training loan fund, a retirement fund, an affordability fund and state facility grants.

In California, advocates are drafting a proposal for legislation to establish a career ladder and minimum salary goals for child care providers. The proposal would offer salary enhancement grants to centers which meet NAEYC accreditation criteria, devote a certain percent of their budget to staff salaries, and serve low- and middle-income families. This proposal also includes training money, a provision for a benefits pool for center staff and family child care providers, and a mechanism for data collection on the child care work force in the state.

WHAT OTHERS CAN DO

Parents

Parents of young children are concerned about the quality of the care their children receive. But they are often unaware of how poorly most child care providers are paid. For many parents, child care is an expensive item in a badly-strained family budget, and the cost may lead them to wonder where their child care dollars go. They may know that some teachers have left their child's program, or that it is difficult to locate a family child care provider--but many do not understand the link between the low supply of good care and the low compensation of caregivers.

Because of the nature of child care services, it is essential to maintain positive parent-staff relations. But under these circumstances, relations between child care staff and parents can easily be strained. The staff may resent parents for not valuing their work enough to pay higher fees. The parents, in turn, may resent being asked to pay more. This strain can be most severe in programs that rely heavily on parent fees. In programs where subsidies are available, parents may be more likely to join efforts to increase the subsidy and in turn to enhance salaries.

It is a credit to both the professionalism of child care advocates and to the dedication of parents that many joint efforts to improve compensation have emerged across the country. For example:

- In Oakland, California, the teachers at a child care center enlisted parent support for a strike for higher wages. During the seven-day work stoppage, 90% of the center's families supported the teachers by establishing "strike schools" in their homes.
- In New York City and in New Hampshire, parents attended demonstrations and offered public testimony in support of the efforts of Head Start staff to increase salaries and benefits.
- In Minnesota, after learning that staff were leaving her child's center because of low salaries, a parent volunteered to develop a brochure on how parents can work to improve child care. This parent has started organizing and speaking to get others involved too.
- In Chicago, child care advocates encouraged parents to join a "Take Your Child to Work" campaign in which parents took life-size outlines of their children to work in order to dramatize the child care crisis.

In many communities, parents have been willing to pay higher tuition rates when they were told the increase would be used to raise staff salaries. This has been especially true

when parents were presented with the results of the National Child Care Staffing Study and other materials on the staffing crisis.

For caregivers, there are three important elements in building a partnership with parents to improve compensation: 1) educating parents about staffing issues at their child's program, 2) educating parents about the staffing crisis, and 3) asking parents for help.

To educate parents about staffing issues at their child's program, caregivers can:

- Develop a manual to introduce new parents to the program, including descriptions of the staff and their qualifications.
- Be sure to let parents know whenever a staff member leaves for economic reasons.
- Explain how much money is spent to operate the program, including the costs of staff salaries, vacation and sick leave policies, and health care coverage.
- Indicate the high proportion of the budget that goes into salaries, as well as other fixed costs such as rent and insurance.

To keep parents informed about the staffing crisis, caregivers can:

- Use the program's newsletter or bulletin board for articles on the staffing shortage and salary issues.
- Make salaries and working conditions a topic for all or part of a parent meeting; a presentation could be made by a staff member or by an outside speaker. The discussion could emphasize how parents and staff both suffer from the effects of an underfunded system.
- Provide local, state or national data on salaries, benefits and working conditions, and on how these compare to other occupations.
- Describe how high turnover and teacher shortages result from low wages and stressful working conditions.
- Use data from the National Child Care Staffing Study to discuss the effect of the staffing crisis on the quality of the program.
- Give parents a copy of the Child Care Employee Project's brochure, "Critical Questions: What You Should Know About Your Child's Teachers."

To enlist parents' help, caregivers can:

- Involve parents in community events such as provider recognition days.
- Encourage parents to ask their employers for help in paying for child care, such as flexible benefits, a Dependent Care Assistance Plan, or a Flexible Spending/Salary Reduction Account. The additional monies can be targeted for staff salary increases.
- Ask parents to use their influence in the community to convince employers, charitable organizations or business or civic groups to address the child care staffing issue.

- Ask parents to help publicize the child care staffing crisis and discuss their own child care situation in the local media.
- Inform parents about federal, state and local legislation that addresses staffing issues, and involve them in letter-writing campaigns and other lobbying efforts.

Directors

Center directors play a pivotal role in the struggle to raise salaries for child care staff. When staff demand higher wages, a director must determine whether the center's budget is stretched to its limit, whether there are additional resources that could be allocated to staff salaries, or whether more money could be brought into the center through fundraising or parent fees. Sometimes, all a director can do is acknowledge the staff's needs and support their efforts to advocate for better compensation.

Because directors usually bear the responsibility of keeping a center's budget balanced, they must juggle the conflicting pressures of compensating the staff decently while keeping fees affordable for parents. Directors are legitimately concerned that if they raise salaries, they will have to increase fees, and that parents may leave their center in search of a less expensive program.

But in the past few years, many center directors have decided that raising fees was necessary in order to retain their staff. Some centers have increased fees across the board to all families, while others have implemented sliding fee scales to help keep care affordable for lower-income families. For example:

- A parent cooperative center in Hyde Park, Illinois raised parent fees 25% after the staff threatened to quit unless they received raises. The director undertook an extensive effort to educate parents about the issue, and as a result, the parents decided to raise the tuition.

- A center in Ithaca, New York was able to give a $2,000 raise to each of its employees after they threatened to quit. The director negotiated with the board to implement a new sliding fee scale to make more money available for salaries.

For a practical discussion of this topic, see "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Raising Rates to Raise Wages," available from the Child Care Workers Alliance, 310 East 38th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55409, 612-824-1550.

Being caught between parent and staff needs can leave directors feeling isolated and without allies. This feeling of isolation can become particularly acute if staff chose to unionize. However, some directors have welcomed a union contract, finding that it helped to clarify policies and streamline communication.

- A director of a center in Boston related her response to having her staff unionize. "Once the union contract was negotiated and signed, our personnel policies were settled and my staff and I could focus on classroom issues. I had clear policies I could rely on whenever there was conflict. There was an additional benefit I hadn't anticipated which was what it did for the staff. It gave them a sense of unity and a real investment in our center as their work place."

Many directors have found that joining a directors' association can offer not only personal support, but a chance to educate policy makers and the community about the child care staffing crisis and to demonstrate their support for teachers. For example:

- In Connecticut in 1986, a group of directors from state-subsidized centers raised a small amount of money to hire a lobbyist to advocate at the legislature for a larger appropriation for their programs and an increase in the state-mandated staff salary schedule. This effort yielded a $3.7 million appropriation for salary increases in the state day care budget.

- The Child Care Directors Group of Seattle sponsors a parade through downtown Seattle each year to bring public attention to child care. In 1990, the parade's theme was "Worthy Work, Worthless Wages," and directors used the opportunity to publicize findings from the National Child Care Staffing Study.

- The Oakland Early Childhood Association, a directors' group, organized centers in their area to distribute "Full Cost of Care Invoices" to parents along with their regular monthly tuition bills. The Invoice is an educational tool that demonstrates what the cost of child care would be if teachers were paid comparably to similarly educated people in other occupations. It lets parents know how much teachers in their centers are "subsidizing" their fees. Copies of the Full Cost of Care Invoice packet are available from the Child Care Employee Project.

- Project Organizational Quality, co-sponsored by the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, the Early Childhood Directors Association, and Resources for Child Caring, is a three-year project to help centers become better employers by becoming better-run organizations. POQ is working with 20 centers to help them to economize and maximize their revenues through better management practices. Funds generated from improvements must be used to improve staff wages, benefits and working conditions.

Owners of For-Profit Programs

While it would be quite easy to draw a divisive line between staff and owners, it is in fact in an owner's self-interest to address the staffing crisis. Recent research has presented powerful documentation that when turnover is high, parent consumers are the most dissatisfied: mothers missed their children more, had stronger feelings that their children did not benefit from being in child care, and felt more inadequate as parents.[3] Thus, for-profit programs concerned with positive consumer relations have found that they must find ways to improve salaries.

When owners attend workshops on child care salary issues, sometimes they feel frustrated: "I haven't paid myself much at all in order to pay teachers." "I feel like getting out of this business. I can't get the start-up money that nonprofits can. I've mortgaged myself to the hilt in order to start this business and now all I do is fill out W-2 forms and put ads in the paper for staff."

However, more and more owners are seeing that their problems are shared by non-profits, that everyone in the field is in this together, and that everyone will have to take action to solve these problems. There is an increased willingness to join with others working to secure the full cost of care.

Some owners, of course, are making money at the expense of the staff but as the National Child Care Staffing Study shows, this results in higher turnover. Clearly, such a business tactic can only yield short-term gain, and lead to long-term loss. As other centers work to resolve the salary crisis and stabilize their staffing, parent consumers may eventually shun programs which they feel are harming their children through frequent turnover. Some for-profit chains have begun to recognize this possibility, and are taking steps to make their centers' salaries more competitive with other programs by increasing parent tuition primarily to raise teacher and director salaries, structuring staff salary plans to encourage and reward teachers who obtain more early childhood-related training, and paying for a portion of teachers' training costs.

Teacher Educators

Nearly one thousand colleges and universities in the United States offer courses geared to people working in or seeking a career in early childhood education. In addition, hundreds of community organizations--such as resource and referral agencies, child care centers and professional groups--offer courses and workshops for child care providers. Many of the educators teaching these courses contribute to the movement for better compensation.

Teacher educators offer guidance about appropriate activities and ways to interact with children. They are a major source of information about how to be a teacher.

Increasingly, they are also helping students to develop appropriate expectations for their working environment, drawing the link between teachers' well-being and their ability to provide a good learning situation for children. And because of the inadequate working conditions that are prevalent in child care, teacher educators often find it necessary to help their students develop skills to advocate for better wages and working conditions.

But teaching students about the adult work environment, and about ways to improve it, is still a new and limited practice. Traditional teacher education has focused exclusively on children's needs--in effect, disregarding any adult needs apart from the need for training in child development. While there is a large body of knowledge about child development and appropriate caregiving practices, researchers and practitioners have only recently become concerned with the relationship between teachers' working conditions and the quality of children's programs.

A lack of information, however, is not the entire problem. Early childhood practitioners, on the whole, have been reluctant to speak up for themselves, as if this would negate their commitment to children. Focusing on one's own needs for respect and decent compensation can easily be viewed as selfish, rather than as a building block for self-esteem and a necessity for survival. Teacher educators can play an important role in affirming that it is legitimate for teachers to be concerned about their work environment.

The first step is to integrate into teacher training curricula the growing body of research data on the link between the needs of adults and children. Educators can also apply their knowledge of human development: like children and parents, caregivers require a nurturing and secure environment to develop self-esteem. Educators can bring to the field a new awareness that teachers' attention to their own well-being is both valid in itself and important to the children they care for.

Several resources are available to help educators integrate the recognition of adult needs and the teaching of advocacy skills into their curricula:

Beyond "Just Working With Kids": Preparing Early Childhood Teachers to Advocate for Themselves and Others is a curriculum guide developed by a group of early childhood educators in California. It contains suggested readings for students and instructors, as well as classroom activities organized around six key issues: the process of social change; the social and economic organization of society; multicultural perspectives; the value and image of child care; the nature, economics and organization of child care; and child care's link with other social services. Available for $4.00 from the Child Care Employee Project.

Working for Quality Child Care, by the Child Care Employee Project, is a text geared for use in community college programs and other early childhood education courses. Unit I provides an overview of the child care work force and efforts to upgrade the field. Unit II focuses on employee rights and on maintaining good

relationships and a healthy work environment. Unit III centers on administrative issues, such as grievance procedures, salary schedules, evaluations and substitute teachers. An instructor's guide includes classroom activities to supplement the text. Available from the Child Care Employee Project at a cost of $7.00 each for Unit I & II and $6.00 for Unit III.

Taking Action: A Proposal for Improving Compensation in the Early Childhood Field Through Employee Activism, by Jim Morin, provides an analysis of the staffing crisis and the role of teachers in addressing it, as well as suggested workshop formats designed to help teachers and family day care providers become active in creating solutions. Available for $5.00 from Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, 1245 E. Washington Ave., Suite 260, Madison, WI 53703, 608-257-0909.

A Great Place to Work: Improving Conditions for Staff in Young Children's Programs by Paula Jorde Bloom, explains the importance of a good work environment and provides checklists for teachers and directors to evaluate their centers' working conditions and climate. Available for $5.00 from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009, 800-424-2460.

Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy, by Stacey G. Goffin and Joan Lombardi, discusses how to improve services for children by advocating for the profession, and describes how to build support for an issue, including effective ways to approach the general public and policy makers. Available for $6.00 from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Teacher educators can play another important part in upgrading the field: acting as role models in working for change. Many are already engaged in efforts to increase support for early childhood services on their campuses and in the community. For example:

- Instructors have enlisted student support in conducting local salary surveys, sharing the results with centers and pressuring centers to raise wages by refusing to list jobs for their students which pay less than the average community wage.

- At Chabot College in Hayward, California, the early childhood department has worked with the Child Care Employee Project to develop an experimental **Mentor Teacher Program.** Funded by a local foundation and business, and supported by the college, the Mentor Teacher Program addresses several elements of the staffing crisis by providing: 1) advanced training to teachers already working in the community to enable them to supervise student teachers; 2) additional income to mentors, resulting in a career ladder which helps to retain qualified staff; and 3) an opportunity for intensive on-the-job training for students.

For more information, contact Peyton Nattinger, Chabot College, 25555 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward, CA 94545, 415-786-6921.

- Thirty-five colleges and community agencies in the Boston area are collaborating in the Child Care Careers Institute, initiated and partially funded through a United Way effort to address the staffing crisis. The Institute will work with community-based training projects to ensure that their courses can be used toward college degrees, and will also work with institutions of higher education to offer and acknowledge credits for community-based and in-service training. At the same time, the Institute will work with child care agencies to adopt salary schedules based on education in order to establish a recognized career ladder. For more information, contact Joan Costley, Wheelock College, 200 The Riverway, Boston, MA 02215, 617-734-5200 ext. 224.

Modeling the behaviors that one wants children and adults to adopt has long been accepted in the early childhood field as a teaching method. Instructors who are skilled in teaching and advocacy can help to create a field of early childhood teachers who are knowledgeable about the needs of adults and children, and skilled at working for the social change required to meet them.

Early Childhood Organizations

Many organizations are working to improve compensation, but only a few are dedicated solely to this issue, and most of these are in an early stage of development. The exceptions are the Minneapolis Child Care Workers' Alliance, which spearheads efforts throughout Minnesota and has developed many useful organizing tools and strategies, and the Child Care Employee Project, which functions at both a national and local grassroots level to address staffing issues.

While unions which represent child care teachers are dedicated primarily to improving compensation and protecting rights at the workplace for their members, many are also involved in public policy campaigns to enhance salaries at the state and federal level. District 65 UAW in Massachusetts and AFSCME in New York, for example, were major forces in securing statewide salary enhancement legislation.

At the national level, the major child care organizations are working to address different aspects of the staffing problem. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is concentrating efforts on building public awareness and action through its Full Cost of Care Campaign. (Reaching the Full Cost of Quality is a handbook for advocates working on the campaign available from The National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington D.C. 20009, 800-424-2460). NAEYC is also ensuring professional standards and quality through the Accreditation Program and the Professional Development Model. In support of efforts

to improve compensation, NAEYC initiated the Compensation Action Grant program, which funds affiliate activities. The Child Care Action Campaign and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies are focused on increasing public awareness of the staffing crisis. Several training institutions, such as Wheelock College, are addressing options for expanding and enhancing training. The Children's Defense Fund, in addition to spearheading the drive for increased federal dollars for child care, is tracking quality improvements in state funding and regulation. And the National Head Start Association advocated for salary increases in the Head Start reauthorization for 1990.

Many of these early childhood organizations also work at the local level to improve compensation and to educate their communities about the importance of a well-trained and adequately paid work force.

- Approximately fifty NAEYC affiliate groups now have Quality, Compensation and Affordability (QCA) committees to spearhead local efforts on these issues.

- The Illinois and California AEYC affiliates are helping to develop salary enhancement bills.

- The Rhode Island AEYC sponsored a statewide seminar on compensation.

- The Wisconsin AEYC developed Taking Action, a training manual to help empower teachers (see description in section on Teacher Educators, above), and is planning a series of workshops to encourage staff to take action on compensation.

- The Utah AEYC is launching a public awareness campaign based on a statewide salary survey it conducted.

Family child care associations have also been educating the public about the value of their work and encouraging members to raise their rates to cover their costs.

- A county-wide family child care association in Southern California conducts an annual rate survey to offer guidance to providers on how to adjust their rates.

In some communities, early childhood groups are working together on child care staffing issues.

- Project Organizational Quality is coordinating efforts among major child care groups in the Minneapolis area to develop realistic standards to be used by 2employers and policy makers to improve staff wages, benefits and working conditions. (For information, contact Nancy Johnson, POQ, Greater Minne-

apolis Day Care Association, 1628 Elliot Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55404, 612-341-2454.)

Resource and Referral Agencies

Resource and referral agencies play a critical role in educating parents about how to select child care and how to assess program quality. R&Rs have sometimes been reluctant to advocate for higher salaries for child care staff, however, because they recognize that higher salaries may mean higher fees, and are rightfully concerned about the affordability of services. Yet some R&Rs have used their newsletters and other publications to inform parents about the staffing crisis, seeing this as part of their responsibility to teach parents about quality care. Recent R&R efforts include the following:

- The Onondaga County Child Care Council in Syracuse, New York celebrated the Week of the Young Child with an education campaign aimed at helping parents understand the importance of quality staff in child care programs. For the campaign, the R&R produced a documentary photo exhibit, "A Day in the Life of a Child Care Teacher," and a brochure, "Child Care Teachers: The Key to Quality Child Care." The exhibit and brochure were introduced at a press conference in a downtown shopping mall.

- In 1988, Community Coordinated Child Care, an R&R in Madison, Wisconsin, established a Child Care Worker Project to foster dialogue between parents and child care staff. The agency published a brochure for parents, providing information about pay and turnover, as well as suggestions about what parents could do to support teachers. The Project distributed the brochures and an accompanying poster to centers throughout the county.

- Child Action in Sacramento, California is one of many R&Rs that sponsor an awards dinner each year to honor child care professionals. These events usually present awards and prizes to child care teachers and providers whom the community has chosen to recognize for exceptional work. Publicity and media work in preparation for an awards dinner is an opportunity to call attention to the role of child care providers in a community. R&Rs often work with other child care service and advocacy groups to organize these celebrations.

An essential component for solving the staffing crisis is consumer demand for a skilled and qualified work force. Resource and referral agencies, more than any other organization in a community, are positioned to help build that demand. For a practical resource which can help R&Rs with parent education, see "Critical Questions: What You Should Know About Your Child's Teachers," a brochure available from the Child Care Employee Project.

Researchers

Although child care has been thoroughly studied over the last fifteen years by researchers and public policy analysts, the child care work force has been largely ignored as a subject of inquiry. Until recently, only minimal data was available about caregivers themselves. Government sources offered limited and often confusing information about the work force.[4] Two major studies in the late 1970s, one focusing on family day care and the other on center-based care, provided baseline information about salaries and turnover rates, and identified the importance of child-related training to enable providers to deliver quality services.[5,6] In the early 1980s, an in-depth study of San Francisco teachers found links between compensation, turnover and job dissatisfaction.[7] Later in the decade, many local salary surveys from around the country confirmed the relationship between low wages and poor staff retention rates.[8]

Interestingly, much of this study of the child care work force has been initiated and conducted by child care providers and advocates themselves, not by professional researchers. Faced with a growing staffing crisis, the child care field recognized the need for up-to-date, local information about inadequate pay and high turnover in order to support its efforts to improve the situation. In the mid-1980s, the Child Care Employee Project developed a standardized salary survey instrument.[9] Scores of surveys have now been completed, using the CCEP format or a similar approach. These data have been instrumental in helping to bring about change. Advocates in Massachusetts and New York, for example, used salary findings to strengthen their case in lobbying for salary enhancement legislation.[10,11,12]

For many, the salary facts speak for themselves: they tell a disturbing story of people who are trained in early childhood education and unable to make a living wage, and a story of a highly unstable field which many trained providers are leaving. But the link between the adult work environment and children's experience has eluded many people, including policy makers, parents, the general public and even some people in the child care field. Recent research, such as the National Child Care Staffing Study (NCCSS), a collaborative effort between university and community-based researchers, has begun to establish this link. The NCCSS, released in the fall of 1989, was specifically designed to expand on existing child care research, exploring how the adult work environment, including wages, turnover, working conditions and staff training, influences the quality of services.

The NCCSS has been widely disseminated in the child care and public policy communities and in the media. The National Governors' Association summarized the study in its most recent publication, Taking Care: State Developments in Child Care, and recommended that state governments explore ways to raise salaries.[13]

Local salary statistics, when coupled with the NCCSS findings, can now demonstrate the connection between low pay for staff and poor care for children. Advocates can also

use the emerging work of other academic disciplines in making the case for better compensation. Economists, for example, have begun to explore how the child care work force subsidizes the cost of services through low wages, and what services would cost if staff were paid adequately.[14]

When advocating to improve the quality of child care services, it is important to assess what kinds of research information would be helpful:

- If no data about wages and turnover exist for your community or state, consider conducting a salary survey. These data will help build support for raising salaries, and will serve as a benchmark from which to measure change over time. Contact the Child Care Employee Project for information about surveys, data analysis and ways to publicize the results. Contact NAEYC, 800-424-2460, about their Compensation Action Grants; several communities have received CAG grants to partially fund the expenses of conducting a survey.

- If data has not been collected in your community for a year or more, consider replicating the survey. In Northern Alameda County, California, four surveys over an eight-year period provide a clear picture of trends in the community and the need for ongoing efforts to raise salaries.

- If you are working to improve salaries with a specific project, or are proposing a new policy initiative, enlist the help of researchers in designing an evaluation procedure. Some of the early salary enhancement efforts were not statistically evaluated, and although they were generally considered effective, there was no factual base to use in arguing for their continued support. Your efforts, whether successful or not, can be learning tools for other advocates.

Employers

Businesses are increasingly concerned about the calibre of the future work force, and are recognizing child care and early education as integral to their success in the 21st century. In connection with their growing involvement in child care, several companies are beginning to make a significant investment in remedying the staffing crisis. Recent efforts include the following:

- AT&T has created a $10 million fund to improve community child care for the benefit of its employees. Priority is given to NAEYC-accredited programs. One of NAEYC's newest guidelines for accreditation requires that the annual program evaluation include an assessment of salaries, benefits, and turnover and a plan to address these issues.

- IBM has created a $22 million fund to increase the supply of child care and improve its quality; $250,000 is specifically targeted to helping programs become NAEYC-accredited.

- The CEO of Duke Power has convened a task force of North Carolina business executives in an attempt to address the funding crisis in child care.

- Eastman Kodak and several other companies in the Rochester, New York area have formed a consortium to coordinate efforts to enhance education for all children up to the age of eight. One of its major target areas is the high teacher turnover rate due to poor compensation. The companies approached Blue Cross/Blue Shield and negotiated a lower-cost basic health care package, to be made available to child care providers.

- Some corporate foundations have become quite active in child care. The McKnight Foundation (3M), for example, has given money to Project Organizational Quality, targeted to help Minneapolis-area child care centers improve business practices, wages, benefits and working conditions.

When approaching employers, child care advocates should ask them to consider the following:

- Provide Dependent Care Assistance Plans for their employees to help them pay for the full cost of child care services.

- Ensure that teachers at on-site child care centers receive pay and benefits commensurate with other company employees with similar qualifications and responsibilities.

- Support efforts to improve quality for the entire community by establishing or contributing to a fund earmarked for scholarships, training, salary enhancement or a mentor-teacher program.

CONCLUSION

When the Child Care Employee Project began in the late seventies we were a small, local volunteer group. A decade later, we have a nationwide membership of dedicated people, many of whose efforts are chronicled in this report. These are the heroines and heroes of the child care compensation movement, the people who have refused to silently accept the diagnosis of a failing child care system by fighting to change it.

The Child Care Employee News contains up-to-date information about efforts to improve compensation and training for child care teachers and providers. CCEP members receive a one-year subscription to the News, published three times a year, and an annual salary summary that reports on findings from state and local salary surveys:

$100/year - Sustaining Membership ($90/year for child care workers)

$50/year - Supporting Membership ($40/year for child care workers)

$35/year - Organization/Center Membership (includes 2 copies of each newsletter)

$25/year - Regular Membership ($15/year for child care workers)

For more information about the Child Care Employee Project or any of the efforts mentioned in this resource, contact the CCEP office: 6536 Telegraph Ave., Suite A201, Oakland, CA 94609, 415-653-9889.

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Child Care Employee Project
6536 Telegraph Avenue, Suite A-201, Oakland, CA 94609
415.653.9889
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